

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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Spring Cleanup Needed After Winter Rains

SAN FRANCISCO, February 23, 2010 – Winter rains like the storms California has been experiencing these past few weeks bring much-needed relief to the state's water resources. Unfortunately, that is not their only impact; they also let loose a flood of trash and debris upon the state's coast and ocean, washing millions of pounds of litter and debris from city streets and urban areas into storm drains and ultimately out to the ocean. In response, the California Coastal Commission's Adopt-A-Beach Program is asking the citizens of California to help clean up this trash before it becomes a permanent fixture in the marine environment, where it may cause fatal harm to birds, fish, and marine mammals.

The California Coastal Commission's Adopt-A-Beach program is a year-round effort to help keep our beaches free of harmful marine debris. When a group adopts a beach they commit to cleaning it three times per year (school groups are required to clean up only once per year). The program has been a success since its inception in 1984, but always needs helping hands, especially during the rainy season. In 2009, with only 18% of Beach Managers reporting, over 48,700 volunteers participated in the state-wide program and prevented over 210,000 pounds of debris from reaching our ocean. Schools, youth groups, community groups, churches, businesses and individuals contributed to this effort. “The Adopt-A-Beach program provides free tools and resources to all Californians so they can have a positive impact on their coastal and marine environments. This is our home, and we have to stop trashing it,” states Shannon Waters, statewide Adopt-A-Beach Coordinator with the California Coastal Commission.

Some Adopt-A-Beach volunteers are inspired by the program to go even further in their efforts to protect the California coast. In Monterey County, 13 year old Sierra Garcia felt that more needed to be done to prevent marine debris, so she created the Save Our Sea Club with the aim of inspiring and encouraging her peers to act and bring about positive behaviors and coastal stewardship. “Teens and younger kids need to do the most,” said Sierra. “We have our whole lives ahead of us to do something important for the earth, and when you start talking about it, young people listen. They pay tons of attention since it’s unusual. It should not be [the] exception to the rule for young people to help.”

To find out how you can be a part of this state-wide Adopt-A-Beach effort visit www.coast4u.org or call (800) COAST-4-U.

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